



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION II

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SUBJECT: Removal Site Evaluation for Puerto Rico Containers, Hato Tejas, Bayamon, Puerto Rico
(CERCLIS ID No. PRN000204378)

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Introduction

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Removal Action Branch has been requested to conduct a Removal Site Evaluation (RSE) at Puerto Rico Containers, a site where no further remedial action is planned (NFRAP). The NFRAP determination signifies that no additional remedial steps will be taken to list the site on the National Priorities List unless new information warranting further Superfund consideration or conditions not previously known to EPA regarding the site are disclosed. As of July 27, 2005, EPA had determined that no further remedial action was warranted by the Federal Superfund program at Puerto Rico Containers.

Site Description and Background

The Puerto Rico Containers Site (Site) is located on Road 2 (KM 15.2) in Hato Tejas Ward, Bayamon, Puerto Rico. Between 1962 and 2002 the Site was used by various companies, including Puerto Rico Containers, to manufacture corrugated paper and assemble and label cardboard boxes. Between 1980 and 1983 Puerto Rico Containers Company (PRCC) discharged process wastewater to a drainage ditch that lead to the Hondo River located 1/3 of a mile west of the Site. In 1983 a septic tank and underground injection system was built to replace the surface discharge. Between 1983 and 1997 the underground injection system reportedly received process waters coming from the boilers, printing machines and from the gluing and labeling area. After 1997 the system was used exclusively for sanitary wastewater. During a visual inspection in June 2000 Puerto Rico's Environmental Quality Board (EQB) observed a water treatment plant, two 5,000 gallon above ground storage tanks (fuel) and the underground septic tank and injection system.

In 2003 the Site was purchased by "Desarollos Inmobiliarios de Hato Tajas". At that time the site was occupied by a furniture store and several other businesses, none of which utilized hazardous substances. By 2005 all above ground tanks were removed and much of the property had been covered with concrete or asphalt.

The Site is in a light commercial and residential area. The closest residences are in the Primavera Apartment complex directly adjacent to the Site to the southwest. The Site occupies approximately 14 acres and is completely fenced.

Site assessment activities/observations

The Pre-Remedial Site files, which included a Site Inspection Letter Report by EQB (July 2005), were reviewed as part of this RSE. A site reconnaissance was conducted by the Removal Action Branch on October 26, 2012. It was observed during the reconnaissance that the Site was fenced and the front gate was guarded by security personnel. There is one large one-story concrete building (182,000 square feet) in the center of the Site occupied currently by 'Berrios Furniture'. Much of the area around the building is covered by concrete or asphalt. Several small grassy areas did not show any signs of stressed vegetation. The main gate also appears to provide access to a Puerto Rico Department of Education building located to the west of the furniture store.

Release or threatened release into the environment of a hazardous substance, or pollutant or contaminant

Reportedly PRCC utilized toluene as a raw material in its process. During the removal of a diesel underground storage tank (UST) in 1990, soil samples revealed low levels of toluene and total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH) around the tank. Three monitoring wells were installed as part of the closure plan for the UST. Historic data (from 2000 and older) indicate low levels of TPH in groundwater on the Site.

Threats to Public Health or Welfare

The Site is fenced and paved limiting any potential direct contact exposures to soil. The nearest private well is a non-potable well water source for AJM Meat Packing Inc. This well is 600 feet deep and located about 1,000 feet north of the Site. The nearest PRASA well (known as Maderas Tratadas) is located more than ½ mile from the Site to the northwest. Maderas Tratadas serves potable water to about 25 persons. The ground water flow is to the north/northwest driven by the influence of the Hondo River. The levels of hazardous substances found in groundwater are not such that would warrant further investigation by the Removal Action Branch.

Threats to the Environment

Historic discharges to Hondo River may have contained oil, printing washwaters and glue residues. However, no sampling data is available from the discharge point and discharge to the river ceased in 1983.

Conclusions

Based on the available information the Site does not warrant a Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) removal action at this time.